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Assisting Professional Militaries in Latin America

National Security Strategy Development Workshop, La Paz, Bolivia
28 July – 1 August 2003

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The Challenge of Professionalization

Professionalization of their nation's military establishment is a challenge for some Latin American democracies because of the historical baggage carried by their armed forces. The populations of the countries concerned are often suspicious of providing these former repressive organizations with modern "equipment and techniques". However, the reality is, that the region's military organizations existing with less than adequate training and professional standards as well as operating in an under resourced environment are susceptible to corruption and politicization, and in that way pose a threat to further democratic development.

Success of military to military engagement in Latin America must be measured by the growth of professionalism within the armed forces of the region. Engagement for engagement's sake has some valuable paybacks, but alone these can no longer justify the expense. Today the armed forces of the region must be capable of effective military support to civilian authorities in addressing narco-trafficking, terrorism, and disaster response. This is not a short-term effort, but calls for a long-term investment to improve the military culture of the region.

As the representative governments within the region mature, it is vital for the individual militaries to become recognized as part of the national solution. To accomplish this they must develop a system that will allow them to identify their role in support of the national interests and to compete for the resources required for professionalization and force modernization. This challenge is complicated in many countries by the absence of definitive national security guidance from their government.

The US Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) identified this problem and is aggressively pursuing a program promoting the development of defense strategies or defense white papers within their AOR. It is the hope that with these documents in hand the armed forces can compete within the national budget processes to acquire the funding necessary to begin the modernization and professionalization process. To gain synergy from each other the modernization and professionalization efforts need to proceed on parallel courses. A well-equipped, unprofessional armed force is a tool for tyrants. A professional force without the proper capabilities is a blunt instrument of power. Modernization programs must be matched to the required capabilities to address the identified threats. Professionalization requires the institutionalization of effective personnel policies and practices, mission-oriented training, and a professional military education (PME) system that impacts on the armed forces from top to bottom. It is within the PME system that over time the culture of the profession of arms and its role in a democratic society will be instilled in today's operators and tomorrow's leaders.

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Democratization Initiatives Support Simulation (DISS)

Since 1996 the U.S. Army War College (USAWC) Center for Strategic Leadership (CSL) has supported the USSOUTHCOM efforts to assist the nations of Central and South America in developing a strategic planning process. Utilizing the Democratization Initiatives Support Simulation (DISS), a low-tech “desktop” solution that mimics the U.S. national strategy planning process, USAWC-CSL facilitators cause the mixed military and civilian audience to wrestle with the proper roles for their political, economic, social, and military sectors. During the course of the simulation participants develop a national vision, review available national guidance, direction and projections, and produce an outline strategy for military support of the elected government.

Executed as a collaboration between the USAWC and the senior level Defense College of another nation (for example, Paraguay: Colegio Nacional de Guerra (CONAGUE) 1996, 1997 & 1998; and Honduras: Colegio de Defensa Nacional de Honduras (CDN), 1998, 1999 & 2002), DISS is conducted in two phases, the preparation and distribution of advanced material , and the actual execution of the tabletop simulation. The advanced material “read ahead” provides a scene setting scenario and selected readings on the strategic planning process and the focus nation’s policy statements and documents.

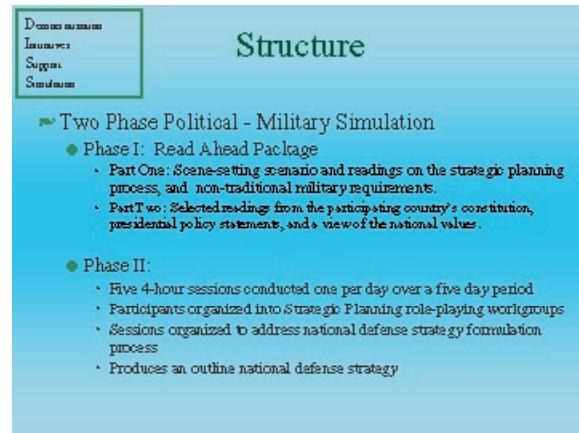
The execution takes place in a non-threatening, academic environment that provides a viable military-civilian decision-making forum where participants address the relevant and the difficult issues of today that will shape their 21st Century national identity. This venue allows the USAWC to directly influence the future leaders of an emerging nation, a valid goal for any senior academic institution.

Bolivian National Security Strategy Development Workshop

At the request of the Commander, U.S. Southern Command, and in collaboration with the Bolivian Escuela de Altos Estudios Nacionales (E.A.E.N.), a USAWC-CSL team conducted a DISS in La Paz, Bolivia during the July 28 – August 2, 2003 period. As originally conceived the USAWC-CSL team was to “...assist in the development and institutionalization of a strategic planning process that allows the Bolivian Ministry of Defense to clearly identify and communicate the resources required to support the President’s national security strategy.” The desired endstate was to produce an outline national defense strategy.

The development and refinement of a national defense strategy is a significant undertaking for any country. In the United States, the National Security and National Military Strategy (NSS/NMS) process involves the combined efforts of a multitude of actors across the interagency team and several months of effort. As this reality became apparent, the scheduled weeklong seminar came to be viewed as an initial phase in a lengthy but necessary process in the development of a national defense strategy.

Approximately one month prior to execution, at the request of the Government of Bolivia, the concept was modified to emphasize the institutionalization of a strategic planning process versus the actual development of an outline national defense strategy. As a result, the venue was switched to the E.A.E.N. campus with the



current class of 61 students (36 Mil/5 Police/20 Civ) making up the participants. This change in concept served as the initial step in establishing a strategic planning course as part of the E.A.E.N. curriculum.

The E.A.E.N. used the read ahead package to prepare the participants for the five-day strategic simulation. Published as a text reference, it provided the students with the necessary background knowledge to effectively participate in the discussions and workgroups.

From July 28 to August 1, 2003 students participated in five seminar sessions and one evening working dinner where final workgroup products were presented. Each day, following a short period of instruction and discussion by the USAWC-CSL team, the students broke into six workgroups to develop the day's requirement. These products were briefed back to all students by each workgroup at the start of the following seminar session.

DAY REQUIREMENT

One	Construction of a vision statement for Bolivia in the year 2008
Two	Identification of National Interests and Objectives
Three	Identification Of Applicable Elements Of Power And The Instruments Of Power Required To Achieve The Identified National Interests
Four	Identification Of Required Resources And Assessment Of Risks Associated With Resource Allocation
Five	Presentation of Final Product to selected Government of Bolivia Officials

Employing the workshop's strategic planning methodology, the Bolivian Ministry of Defense can better define and develop their national defense strategy requirements so that they support the people of Bolivia, and their democratically elected officials, who determine the ultimate path for the policy and the country.



Strategic Planning Workshop Final Briefing. Panel included (l to r) PROF B.F. Griffard, USAWC; Maj Gen A.C. Webber, Permanent Secretary, Bolivian National Defense Council; MG J.A. Gil, Director, E.A.E.N.; GEN (Ret.) C. Macias, Course Director, E.A.E.N.; COL D. Barreto, Cdr, USMILGRP-Bolivia.

Planners for the Future

Instituting strategic planning as part of the E.A.E.N. curriculum pays dividends on a national scale. This first step initiates a strategic planning capability not only within the military, but also to the other branches of government through their civilian and national police participants. Within a few years, the cadre of trained

strategic planners this program produces will allow the military and other government agencies to develop supportable national and military strategies. This effort is a significant contribution to the professionalization initiatives between the United States and the countries of the Western Hemisphere as they work together in strengthening the military community's ability to support democratic institutions. The ability to develop a sound and supportable national strategic and supporting military strategy will go a long way in fostering further cooperation on issues such as drug trafficking, border control, and environmental protection to name a few. The US Army War College support to the US Southern Command through this event in Bolivia should serve as strong foundation for a continued partnership in this and related efforts.

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This publication and other CSL publications can be found online at <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usacsl/index.asp>.

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